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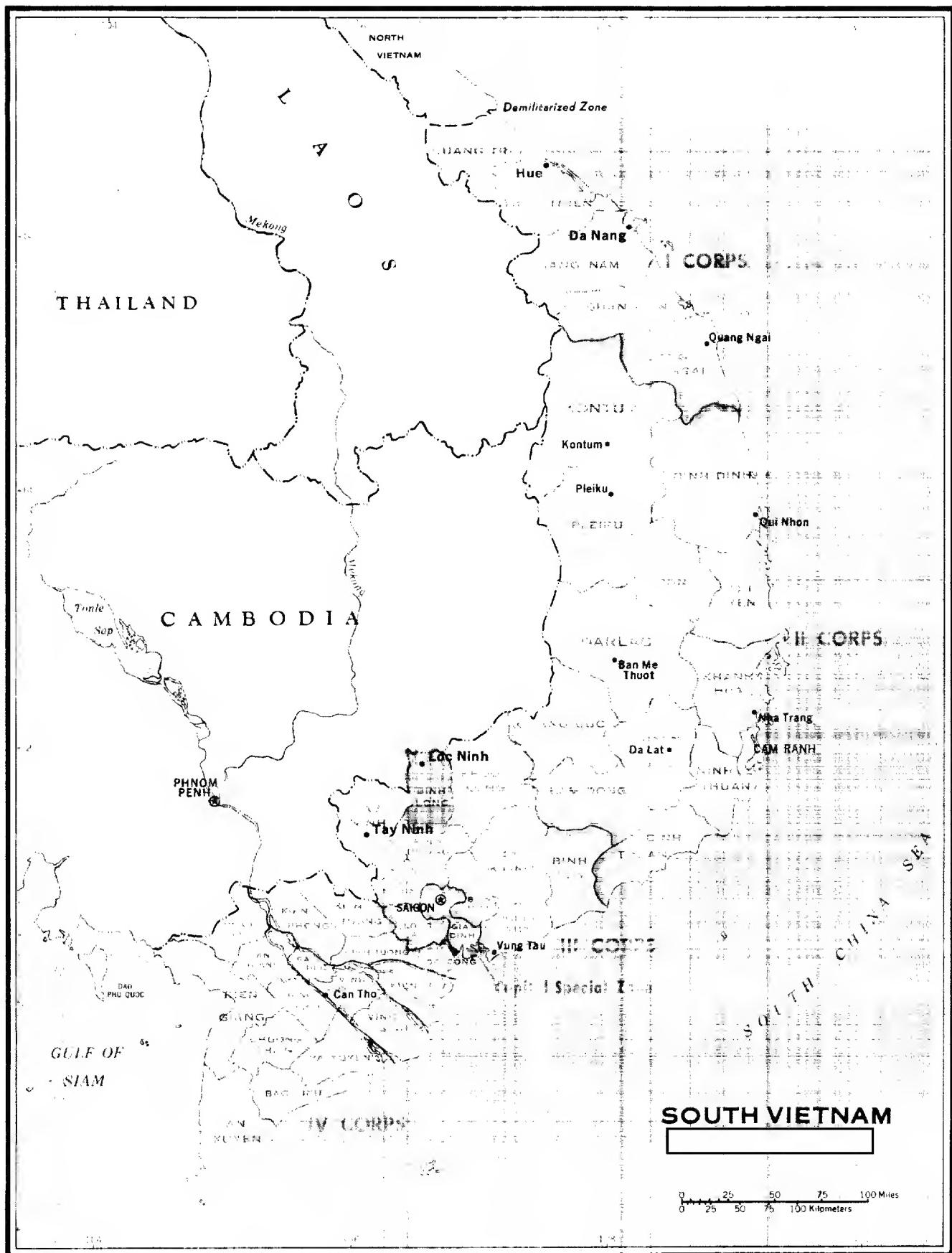
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[South Vietnam: Sharp fighting has been under way in several sections of the country.

In the north, ground action near the Demilitarized Zone and near the cities of Hue and Da Nang resulted in some 150 Communists dead.

The heaviest recent ground engagements occurred during a day-long battle on 12 September just east of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province. The US-initiated action killed more than 100 Communists and may have broken up enemy offensive plans against Loc Ninh.

The Communists also maintained heavy pressure around Tay Ninh city. A 600-round mortar barrage and an attempted ground probe were launched against a nearby US artillery base, and two US convoys on approach routes to Tay Ninh were ambushed.

[redacted] increased Communist offensive activity throughout much of South Vietnam. Shellings and ground assaults are the most likely forms of attacks, but the effects of recent poor weather and vigorous allied spoiling operations probably will limit the scope of any immediate offensive. [redacted]

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Czechoslovakia-USSR: There are indications that the Soviets are scanning the Czechoslovak hierarchy for a leader who will be more responsive than Dubcek to their demands.

Moscow believes that Dubcek has failed to carry out in a timely and effective manner his commitments in Moscow. The removal of Dubcek will be difficult to achieve without arousing the population because of his reputation as a "popular hero." Such a Soviet imposed shift, moreover, would further complicate the situation and make matters worse for Moscow.

The most frequently mentioned candidate for Dubcek's position is Gustav Husak, who since the end of August has been a member of the party hierarchy. Husak's statements on a variety of subjects, including his endorsement of the Moscow agreement, and his favorable treatment by the Soviet press, suggest that he is acceptable to Moscow. He would be a controversial choice, however, because of his background as a Slovak nationalist and a reformer who supports Dubcek's liberal policies.

The Czechoslovak National Assembly yesterday voted into law measures restricting the individual rights of assembly and association. The primary purpose of the new legislation is to eliminate political activity outside the Communist front and to prevent public gatherings that might lead to antiregime or anti-Soviet demonstrations. The assembly also passed temporary censorship provisions that will remain in effect until a new press law legalizing tight controls over mass media can be enacted.

Prague has been restricting travel to Czechoslovakia to comply with Soviet demands that "counter-revolutionary elements" be prevented from posing as tourists. According to Czechoslovak officials, border guards are admitting visitors only for medical treatment, "serious compassionate reasons," and attendance at the Brno international trade fair. There

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will also reportedly be a drastic reduction in the number of Czechoslovaks permitted to travel to the West.

The Czechoslovaks are proceeding with their pre-invasion plans to federalize the country. A Yugoslav correspondent in Prague has reported that the embryonic Communist Party of the Czech Lands, comprising Bohemia and Moravia, may hold its constituent congress around the middle of October. This meeting, establishing a Czech regional party parallel to the existing Slovak party, will therefore pave the way for the convening of a new congress of the national party. The Soviets will probably insist that it correct the errors of the congress which met secretly on the day after the invasion.

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There has been no significant change in the status of the military forces occupying Czechoslovakia during the past 24 hours.

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[redacted] the occupying forces "except for a couple of Soviet divisions" will leave Czechoslovakia by 26 October. [redacted] the withdrawal was arranged during Cernik's discussions in Moscow earlier this week. There have been other reports of a large Soviet troop withdrawal prior to the Czechoslovak national day on 28 October, but thus far neither Moscow nor Prague has issued an official statement on the matter.

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*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State or of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

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Canada: The Trudeau government has given clear priority to domestic affairs in the legislative program presented on 12 September to the opening session of the newly elected parliament.

Foreign affairs were mentioned only briefly, and no timetable was given for completing the current review of foreign and defense policies. On the domestic side, the government spelled out plans for the modernization of parliament, constitutional reform, and various social and economic programs.

Trudeau announced, however, that certain matters left over from the previous parliament will be considered before most of the new programs are introduced. This has prompted the opposition parties to ask what happened to Trudeau's campaign promises of new and imaginative leadership. They plan to call for a vote of no confidence, but the government would easily survive. [redacted]

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USSR: Rumors of impending changes in the Soviet leadership have begun to circulate in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The leadership may itself be aware of these rumors and sensitive to them. Yesterday, appearing publicly together, party chief Brezhnev and Premier Kosygin offered a conspicuous and unusual display of camaraderie possibly intended to dampen speculation about conflict between them. [redacted]

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Portugal: Medical bulletins following Prime Minister Salazar's recent head surgery have been consistently optimistic. The bulletins may be exaggerated and there is concern among Portuguese leaders that he will not return to his usual level of activity. The government apparently wishes to reserve action on the possible appointment of a successor, however, until Salazar can be consulted on the role he wishes to play. In the interim Minister of State Antonio da Mota Veiga is exercising the responsibilities of prime minister. [redacted]

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Indonesia: The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) will hold an important planning conference in Central Java shortly. [redacted]

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major items on the agenda will be the election of a new politburo and the establishment of new guidelines for PKI activities. About 20 senior cadres will attend the conference.

There is evidence of considerable dissension throughout the party over the PKI's future course of action. The most likely upshot of the impending conference is a decision to retain the PKI's general pro-Peking orientation, but in the short term to concentrate on rebuilding and political consolidation instead of again resorting to premature "armed struggle." [redacted]

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Rhodesia: Ultraleftist attacks continue against Prime Minister Ian Smith's constitutional proposals-- barely passed by the ruling Rhodesian Front early this month. They do not, however, pose an immediate threat to Smith's leadership of the party or the country. Defense Minister Graham resigned from the cabinet on 11 September, and an entire Salisbury party branch resigned the next day. The Salisbury branch, however, stated it would not join a new party to fight the Smith proposals. These would solidify white control over Rhodesia but still permit limited African parliamentary participation. Although Graham says he intends to stay in the Front, statements by Smith indicate that he may consider ousting Graham from the party.

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